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The Soul's Salvation through Faith in Christ:

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

7521.181

ORDINATION OF JOHN C. KIMBALL,

AS PASTOR OF

THE FIRST PARISH, BEVERLY, MASS.,

THURSDAY, DEC. 29, 1859.

BY EZRA S. GANNETT.

WITH THE

CHARGE, RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, AND ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,
22, SCHOOL STREET.
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SERMON.

1 Peter i. 9: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

Christianity holds a double relation, to the individual and to society; to society through the individual, and to the individual partly through its connection with his consciousness, and partly through its influence on his outward life. Its fundamental relation, therefore, is to the soul, to the secret consciousness of the individual.

At different periods in the history of the Church, this has been recognized as the most important relation that the gospel fills to man; while at other times, in one or another section of the Church, the office of the Christian faith in securing a discharge of external duties, or its effect on the great interests of society, has been made the chief subject of attention. The tendency of much of the thought and discussion of our own day indicates the propriety of a recurrence to that primitive and still essential quality of the gospel, through which it becomes the author of the soul's salvation.

No one can read the New Testament, and mistake the purpose which Christ had primarily in view. Whether we turn to the records of his ministry, or to the interpretation of that ministry given us in the apostolic letters, we observe that his interest was in man as an individual. The truths

which he unfolded, the precepts which he delivered, his counsels, warnings, promises, were addressed to the private consciousness. Faith in God he makes to be personal; obedience, personal; worship, a spiritual act; repentance, an interior exercise; peace, the heart's contentment with itself. Christ came to be a mediator, not between the race and its Sovereign, but between the soul and its Author. He came to bless the world, by blessing, in the first instance, this and that one of those who make up the world. To regard the establishment of a universal religion as the immediate end of Christ's labors is to overlook the means which he used for this end. As a house is built by adding stone to stone, and timber to timber; so the spiritual temple, of which he is at once foundation and dome, the beginning and the end, approaches its completion only as the number of disciples increases who compose that "building in the Lord."

Equally plain is it that Christ came to rescue man from a state of great want and peril. Whatever we may think of the soul's condition, he thought it a condition that called for help. He represented the Father as having sent him to befriend the soul in its exigency. He regarded man as suffering under the evil of sin; which he treated as an internal malady, that, if not cured, would be fatal. Nothing can be more distinct than his own words: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" he asked with an emphasis alike solemn and tender. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The most startling and searching question, this, that was ever put before a man to answer, be he king or beggar, — a question, that, in its very form, dishonors all outward differences. The whole world, with its pomp, wealth, rank, pleasure, is as nothing in comparison with a human soul. Christ saw the soul hastening to ruin, already involved in ruin: this fact was enough for him. Sin was destroying man: that was enough to awaken his

sympathy. He entered into no discussion respecting the origin of human sinfulness. We find in the Evangelists nothing about "native depravity," or any theory in explanation of the state to which man had reduced himself. He was a sinner, on the broad road to destruction: the naked truth needed nothing to increase its fearful meaning. Christ sought to afford relief. "The Son of man is come," he said, "to save that which was lost." The sheep perishing among the bleak and barren mountains must be brought back to the fold, where it will be cared for, no matter by what tempted to wander off. The prodigal son must be induced to return to his Father's arms, let what may have moved him to leave the home of plenty and peace. This is the interpretation which I put on Christ's mission, ministry, gospel, cross, purpose, and work. If any one understands it differently, I trust he has satisfied himself, by a careful study of the New Testament, that his construction of what he there reads is correct. But, as I read those pages of evangelic narrative and apostolic commentary, one truth seems to me as clear as if it were written on the sky in letters of light; namely, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Now, sin is an affection of the soul, just as much as disease (fever or paralysis) is an affection of the body. It was the soul, therefore, that Christ came to deliver from the wretched state into which it had sunk. It was the soul's secret ills that he sought to cure. There were social disorders enough in his day. Galilee was a miserably misgoverned province; Jerusalem was full of intrigue, faction, and profligacy. But Jesus undertook no political revolution, organized no social reform, let the external evils of city and country alone; while he addressed himself to the spiritual darkness and corruption of which the souls of men were the seats. Repentance was the key-note of his preaching; mercy for sinful man was the revelation which he sealed in his own blood. Christ lived and died that he might become "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that

obey him." The "Saviour!" that is the title which, above all others, belongs to him. Yes, above all others; for Messiah, Son of God, Mediator, and the many other titles which describe his various relations to Heaven or to earth, pour their significance into this, as that which at once needs and explains them all.

And mark, I pray you, my hearers, that this is a title which Christ bears now, in reference to his present influence. It is not a mere token of past service, such as one may retain on leaving the office which conferred it. For men are now sinners, — men in this land blessed with Christian institutions. Here are souls that need salvation as much as the publicans or the Pharisees when Jesus was on earth. Sin is still the universal disease; in some persons more malignant than in others, but in all of us a taint that must be eradicated before we can possess a pure and noble character. Whatever Christ came to be to the men of his time he should be to us. Whatever his religion offered to them as needed by them, it offers to us as needed by us. Whatever his cross revealed or sealed to them, it reveals or seals to us. His blood was "shed for many for the remission of sins." That word "many" takes in all generations and all people. Christ "our Saviour:" that is proper language for us to use. How suitable, let them say, who, by his instruction and persuasion, have been brought out of the bondage of sinful habits, and are conscious of a liberty enjoyed only by those whom he has made sons and heirs of God.

We may abridge the meaning of salvation, not only by giving it a merely historical value, but by unduly limiting its moral import. The familiar use of the word is an example of this error. Salvation is the name commonly given to the initial state of the believer, instead of covering, as it should, his whole experience, from the first act of faith to the last moment of earthly consciousness. The sinner we hear spoken of as "saved," when snatched from the ruin on the brink of

which he was standing. If the consequence of this rescue was subsequent freedom from sin, such a use of the term would be correct; but since he is still imperfect and weak, and therefore liable to sin, and in point of fact does fall into frequent transgression, his salvation must be incomplete. The soul needs to be saved, or delivered from its perils and infirmities, as long as it continues to sin. Until the mind ceases to make an evil choice, or the heart to cherish a wrong desire, the work of salvation is not finished. Christ is saving his followers all the time, from the beginning of a Christian course to its end, because he leads them through successive offices of repentance, and gives them more and more ability to resist temptation. Salvation cannot be complete while there is any thing to be saved from. We do not speak of recovery from illness, or of a physician's having effected a cure, until the sick man is restored to health. If you wished to save one from the habit of intemperance, you would not confine your efforts to such counsel as might produce a return to sobriety, with a conviction of the destructive nature of the vice, but would watch and check and help your fellow-creature, as in his future struggles with appetite he would need friendly support, till you saw that he could be trusted to himself. Now, in the case of every sinner, while there must be that renunciation of evil courses and acknowledgment of their ruinous character, which will mark the commencement of a new life, the converted man, as we know, still gives himself occasion for penitence; and will only, and perhaps slowly, approach the perfection which excludes conscious error. He will be all the time getting more salvation; that is, more deliverance from false judgments, wrong tempers, and sinful tendencies: and only in another world, where he shall begin a sinless life, will he experience full salvation. The word, therefore, instead of expressing only the effect of Christ's influence in the earlier stages of spiritual growth, describes his connection with the soul through the whole of

its present discipline; and, more than any other term, indicates the extent of the soul's obligation to him. As our text declares, we are constantly "receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

The error into which many persons fall, of considering salvation chiefly as a deliverance from hell, or the penalty to which the wicked are exposed, arises from a confinement of its meaning to the introductory process of conversion. So long as the soul remains impenitent, it is in the most imminent danger; from which it is rescued by bringing it to those offices of contrite faith in which it may devote itself to the will of God: and then it is saved from hell, because it obtains forgiveness through the divine mercy. But it needs to be saved from the consciousness, as well as from the punishment, of wrong-doing; and the consciousness is renewed with every indulgence of unholy thought. Salvation means much more than an escape from either outward or inward suffering. It means security, moral integrity, spiritual wholeness. We accept it as denoting, first, the change through which the soul passes on its way from irreligion to religion; and, afterwards, the progress which it makes in a good life. The apostle's arrangement of the successive periods of the Christian experience was strictly correct. Christ "is made unto us," he says, "wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." The redemption should be mentioned last, because it is fully realized only when the whole soul is sanctified, and all its purposes and exercises are in harmony with the Divine will.

And now, having shown the nature of the Saviour's work, let us consider its method. The text will be a sufficient authority on this part of our subject. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Doubtless, by "faith" in this passage the apostle may have meant the expectation, or hope, which the believers entertained; as another of the early Christian writers has defined it to be, not

only "the evidence of things not seen," but "the substance of things hoped for." But his language may also point out the only means of realizing the salvation of which Christ is the author, as we are told once and again by Paul in his brief asseveration, "By faith are ye saved." What, then, is meant by "faith," in this connection? No word has been more sadly turned from its true use, through the unwarrantable limitation of its meaning, which has converted it into a term of technical theology. It is pleasant to find such misuse disallowed in the right quarter. In a recent defence of the miraculous outposts of revelation against the rationalistic tendencies of the times, a writer, who represents the Calvinistic school, remarks, with equal justice and clearness, "No term is more equivocal than 'faith.' It is used in at least five different senses: sometimes to denote belief in general, from whatever source it may spring, or on whatever ground it may rest; sometimes to denote only intuitive or instinctive beliefs, which are not founded on reasoning, but are presupposed in reasoning itself, and are involved even as a necessary condition in all experience; sometimes to denote belief on the ground of human testimony; sometimes to denote belief on the ground of Divine authority; sometimes to denote a higher spiritual exercise, which involves trust in God, even when his ways are most dark and mysterious." Without accepting this as a complete statement, it is sufficient for our present purpose. The apostle, writing to his contemporaries, unquestionably used the word in the fourth of these senses, as denoting a reliance on the divine authority of that gospel which "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." With us, who stand at such a distance in point of time from the facts of the evangelical narrative, faith must signify "belief on the ground of human testimony," as well as "on the ground of Divine authority;" or reliance on Christ as a Divinely commissioned Saviour, according to the record which we find in the New Testament. We are saved by faith

in Christ. That is the Christian doctrine; a doctrine which distinguishes the Christian believer; a doctrine justified by the Christian experience. I say, faith in Christ: not simply faith in his religion, which will follow, of course; but which also may exist without faith in him, because Christianity may be received as an inculcation of truth on its own merits, independently of the evidence which Christ may have furnished that he was sent by God to instruct and save the soul. But such a faith is not that which the New Testament demands.

It may be asked, "What more can be needed? If the gospel be received as a rule of life, on any ground whatever, is not that sufficient?" The answer is an obvious one: The gospel consists partly in the fact, that a special arrangement was made by God, through the mission and mediation of his Son, for the salvation of sinners. This conclusive proof of the Divine love gives to the religion of Christ the character of a "gospel," or good tidings, grateful intelligence. The miraculously attested mission of Christ is not merely the support of the gospel, but an intimate portion of it; as the keel of a vessel, if I may use such a comparison, not only is that on which the vessel rests in the water, but is an essential part of the vessel. We are saved by faith in Christ, because we receive the truth communicated by him as alike authoritative and gracious; because we follow his counsel, trusting in its heavenly character; because we commit ourselves to him as Teacher and Master, Guide and Friend; because, in obedience to his instruction, we adopt new habits of thought, feeling, and action; and because, through gratitude for the love shown in and by him, we are led to the most poignant sense of our own sinfulness towards that Being whom we have neglected or affronted, while He has exhibited such a tender interest in us. In other words, we are saved by being brought to repentance and to a new life. Our hearts are humbled, cleansed, changed. We are turned from sin to righteousness.

The immediate purpose of the gospel, therefore, we say,—

that which it first undertakes, and without which it can accomplish little or nothing beyond, — is the re-formation, the reconstruction, of the character, when that has been built up, as we usually find it to have been, in neglect both of a solid foundation and of just proportions. Now, character is within us. It is the habitation which each man prepares for his soul to live in, — a habitation in which frequent changes may be made, while yet it shall retain a general permanence of aspect. Christianity remodels the whole ; consecrating it to new uses, and giving the soul opportunity of exercise and enjoyment different from what it has before known. But, since much remains to be done after the deliverance of the soul from its confinement within the prison of sinful tastes and habits, Christianity continues to exert an influence, the effect of which is seen in the improvement, or, to use the scriptural and more expressive word, in the " sanctification," of the believer. This influence is maintained, as it was begun, through the soul's recognition of a law of spiritual experience, by means of its faith in him by whom that law has been revealed. In our modern forms of speech, Christ becomes the author, first, of conversion or of awakening, according as the soul had sunk into depravity or into moral lethargy ; and then of progress, as its quickened and directed energies seek the perfection for which it was made : the whole experience of change and of growth constituting what has been styled " the Christian consciousness," — a phrase exposed to the charge of mysticism, yet capable of being used in a true and admirable sense. To produce this consciousness was the purpose of Christ's entrance into the world, of his departure from it by a violent death, of his re-appearance among men after his crucifixion, and of the various agencies which he set in operation through the truth which he announced, the cross on which he suffered, and the kingdom which he established. It is this consciousness which makes one a Christian ; which verifies the words of Christ, " He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet

shall he live;" which explains his language, "I am the vine, ye are the branches;" which secures for the soul peace on earth, and entitles it to the anticipation of a glorious immortality. This consciousness is "salvation by faith:" this is personal religion; this is the soul's witness to itself that it has become a partaker of Divine holiness.

Now, this, I repeat, is the essential thing in an interpretation and use of the gospel, — that it be regarded and be received as the author of a spiritual experience, by which the believer shall translate the symbolic language of Heaven into personal facts; for all truth is but symbol till it is made personal. Christ must reign within us. His title is "Prince of life;" and only when his right to this title is confirmed by the submission of our souls is his appellation of "Saviour" made to express a reality. His "mediatorial" work, on its earthly side, is his redemptive work, or his success in raising human souls into a new consciousness. The "atonement" which he accomplishes consists in his reconciliation of our hearts and wills to the will of God. Whichever of the many statements that describe his relations to man we may prefer as most accurate or most nearly exhaustive, the idea is presented of an interior life, of which he is the occasion. And this idea harmonizes with that teaching of our Lord which has been thought to constitute one of its peculiar features, if not the most peculiar. Christ spoke of feelings, motives, principles, habits of thought, rather than of overt acts. The beatitudes are a compend of his religion: what are they but formulas of the soul? "Blessed are the pure in heart," "the poor in spirit," "the meek," "they who hunger and thirst after righteousness." The commandments which he pronounced chief of all enjoined love to God and love to man, dispositions, states of the heart, habits of the interior life. Do the Epistles of the New Testament offer us an exposition of Christianity different from this? Nowhere. Paul and James agree with one another, and both with Christ. Paul says, not ritual service

nor conventional piety, but religious sentiment, penetrating and filling the soul, is needful; which some persons having understood as a depreciation of external religion, James corrects their error (not Paul's error: he had made no mistake, and James does not charge him with any) by showing that the proof of inward conviction and sensibility is the discharge of positive duties. Peter holds a similar doctrine about godliness. John insists on love, a prevailing state of the soul, as at once the evidence and the security of Christian discipleship. From Matthew to Jude, the instruction is uniform. Not what we do in itself, but what we are (and what we do as the sign of what we are), is important.

The revelations of the gospel lead us to the same conclusion. Its two most distinctive revelations are conveyed to us through the Christian doctrines respecting mercy and the Spirit. I mean not to undervalue its annunciation of "the Father," or its assurance of immortality; and yet I say, that in its exhibition of the Divine mercy, and in its promise of the Divine spirit, it has pronounced its own character with the most emphasis. For, to sinful man, what is immortality but the menace of a fearful retribution, unless it be joined with forgiveness, which mercy alone can bestow? and of what avail is a knowledge of God as our Father, if it do not establish a nearness between our souls and him, of which we find both the statement and the method in the doctrine of the spirit? As man's great need is pardon, so his great privilege is recipiency. Christ, in his gospel, explains the privilege and relieves the need; but, you observe, one is a want, the other a capacity, of the soul. In its most profound disclosures of truth, Christianity, therefore, addresses the innermost nature of man.

If we turn now to those exercises which indicate man's rank in the scale of being, we shall obtain an independent testimony to the value and office of the gospel. In these days, when so much is said of the dignity of human na-

ture, and when precision either of language or of thought is so little studied, it may not be improper to ask in what this dignity consists: and the true answer, I apprehend, we shall find to be this,—that man is most distinguished by his ability of spiritual communion; which is but another name for that faculty of faith which it is the purpose of the gospel to call into exercise. Man's greatness does not lie in his intellect; for conscience is greater: and yet conscience is not his highest endowment. Above that, or below it, as a deeper treasure, is the ability, which he alone of the creatures on earth possesses, of contemplating and loving God. To distinguish and approve the right, lifts him, indeed, above them, since they are destitute of moral perception: but to know God is more than to know right; to love God, more than to choose right. Faith is man's noblest faculty, or function; call it which you please. But mark you, my hearers, one and all, it is a function of the *soul*, which the scholar possesses by no stronger right than the ploughboy. I am tired of this incessant adulation of man, as if he were great in himself. He is great in God; and without God, as the inspiration and end of his being, he is the poorest wreck that was ever tossed on the waves of existence. Now, what says Christianity, what says Christ, to this human being? They say, "Awake, thou fool, and slow of heart! and know" (not thyself, it was heathen counsel and heathen flattery which said this, and no more), "know thy God, that thou mayst know thyself; know thy weakness, that thou mayst know thy strength" (for the Christian paradox, my friends, is the solution of life's mystery,—'when I am weak, then am I strong'); "live by faith, now, here, in this mortal life, that thou mayst live for ever." And it is when man listens to such voices as these, and bows himself in prayer, and makes the Eternal One his trust and his portion, that he is great; greater than La Place calculating the problems of the physical universe, or Goethe in the majesty of his genius: ay, the little child, to whom is pro-

mised the kingdom of heaven, rivalling, in the unconscious glory with which his spirit is clad, the seraphim that walk the starry floor of the skies.

Once more: let me call your attention to the fact, that the best part of literature is that part which nourishes the soul. The most precious books in our libraries are those which describe or aid the soul's growth. Devotional writings meet a want felt by all classes, just as the Psalms of David enjoy an immortal youth. The volumes that retain their popularity through generations have the salt of divine truth in them. The soul is the same in every age: it has the same sins and infirmities and struggles now which it had in Luther's day and in St. Augustine's; and the books that are dear to the heart of humanity treat of the secret experience which is made up of those struggles and infirmities and sins. The soul, too, that has found peace, loves to read of the Father's grace, and the Saviour's friendship, and the holy spirit's consolation. Bunyan's allegory has had fifty readers where Milton's epic has found one. Baxter's "Saint's Rest;" Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" (happiest of titles); Thomas à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ;" Scougal's "Life of God in the Soul of Man" (title more felicitous even than Doddridge's), — it is such books as these that *last;* books in which the soul finds its unspoken confessions written down, and its secret necessities anticipated. The only religion that can survive social changes, and never be outgrown by intellectual culture, is a religion that shall recognize these necessities and respond to these confessions; such a religion as we find in the New Testament, — the religion of him who came into the world to save sinners.

There is, doubtless, danger of bestowing a disproportionate attention on the spiritual element in character. Man's tendency is always to an excess in one direction, that must be balanced by defect in another direction. But a danger should make us watchful, not drive us to disown that, in regard

to which extravagance is the only possible mistake. The probability of running into error is not greater here than in any other case where one form of the religious experience is allowed to engross our interest. Doctrinal religion, if not qualified by other elements, becomes dogmatism and bigotry; ceremonial religion is apt to degenerate into routine and hypocrisy; practical religion, if disjoined from piety, tends to self-conceit or intellectual scepticism; and spiritual religion may end in mysticism. But the last is not the greatest evil of the four. The mystics of different ages have not been the worst Christians. It would not harm us, if we were more fond of meditation and the offices of the closet. It would not make us less practical to be more devout, nor less sound in faith to be more ardent in feeling.

The truth is, that a natural re-action has carried many persons towards an opposite extreme from that which they wished to avoid. As, in its abhorrence of ecclesiastical tyranny, Puritanism stripped worship of its helpful accessories, and sacrificed the Church to the soul (better this, indeed, a thousandfold, than the denial of the soul's rights for the sake of maintaining a hierarchy); as, at the present day, some Protestants hate Rome more than they love Christ: so many among us have shown more disgust at prevalent views of religion, than interest in a true Christian theology or experience. Now, disbelieving has very little merit: it may show some strength of mind or independence of character, but it discovers no spiritual life. In the weariness which some persons have felt under a continual inculcation of doctrinal ideas, they have given themselves up to what they style practical religion; forgetting that religious truth is the only solid basis of practical religion. We are building on the sand, when we build character on any thing less substantial than faith in spiritual realities. The proclivity to an exclusively practical use of the gospel has introduced a style of illustrative instruction, to the neglect — at least, the comparative neglect — of far-

reaching principles. To cite but a single example: because it has seemed to us a common fault in the pulpit, while preaching against sin, to keep silence about actual sins, have we not become reprovers and assailants of sin in detail, as if that were enough; plucking this leaf, breaking down that twig, or lopping off a branch, but not laying the axe to the root? The only way to extirpate sin from the character is to remove the love of sin from the heart. The right method is to attack *sin*, rather than sins; the vice of the soul, rather than its manifestations. Sin does not lie in the action, but in the motive. The corrupt heart must be changed. A change of heart — admirable phrase; never was there a better one — "a change of heart" will bring about a change of life. Implant the love of God in the soul, and the sinner will renounce his evil-doing. Ingraft the believer into the true vine, and he will bring forth good fruit.

I am not urging a return to opinions or methods which were wisely forsaken by our fathers. I have no love for the bondage or the "bread" of Egypt. It was a noble service which the men of fifty and forty years ago (he who then stood in this pulpit, with the contemporaries who agreed with him in his conceptions of Christian truth and Christian liberty, — Abbot and Parker and Channing and Bancroft and Norton and Ware; and their co-adjutors out of the pulpit, — Rantoul and Haven and Gallison and Lowell, and I know not how many like them, frank and firm in their defence of dissent from popular opinions), — it was a noble service which they rendered to New England, and to us their children, when they said, "We will believe what the Bible teaches, and no more and no less." In grateful recollection, let us hail them, this day, as consistent advocates and successful champions of the truth which we prize more than uncounted gold. But our regard for their honored memories need not impose silence on our lips in respect to unforeseen tendencies or results of the movement which received its impulse from them.

If religion has become among us too much a visible uprightness, and too little an inward experience, let us say so; in God's name, let us say so; in our fealty to Christ, let us say so; for our souls' sake, let us say so; for our children's sake, and the sake of those who may accept our construction of the gospel, let us say so. And therefore I do say, that morality without piety, goodness without faith, practical Christianity, as it is sometimes called, without spiritual Christianity interpenetrating and sustaining it, is like a tree, the heart of which has perished; or a fairly bound volume, whose pages afford no instruction. Religion enters into life, or becomes practical, by first passing into the consciousness, and thence infusing itself into the conduct. Personal goodness, without this interior spring and support, is a shell, a color, a disguise, not a substantial and permanent reality. If you would have honest, kind, and generous neighbors, persuade them to take Christ into their hearts as their Lord and Saviour. If you would be thorough and consistent in goodness yourself, embrace him with a hearty faith. The soul shapes the life. The Christian soul subdues speech and behavior into manifestations of itself. When we care not for what we seem, but for what we are, we make the appearance a true picture of the inward life. It is the soul that must experience the power of the gospel as a Divine gift and a Divine influence. It is an unseen experience that must prove our estimation of the Saviour in whom we believe. It is the *soul* that must be saved; and saved by its spiritual, Christian, Divine, let me style it — for it is sympathy with the infinite excellence of God — its Divine consciousness. The external blessings of Christianity are just occasions of thankfulness; but what are they in comparison with the light, the strength, the peace, the comfort, the hope, the joy, of which it makes the soul the possessor?

We hear much in these days of the social reforms which are needed, and which Christian men are carrying on. So far as they are conducted in a Christian spirit, and with a

reliance on Christian truth, success attend them! Let them have our sympathies, our efforts, and our prayers. But the removal of social abuses is not the object for you or me, or any man, to adopt as his end in life. The "end of our faith" is "the salvation of our souls." Inward reformation is the work which we must first undertake. This we can accomplish, each one for and in himself. The individual can correct the abuses of his own life; can eradicate the errors of his own heart; can make his own consciousness a proof of the efficacy of the gospel. God bless all honest philanthropists! — they are servants of the Lord Jesus, and friends of their kind. But the Lord Jesus offers salvation to the world by offering it to the individual. In ourselves must the Divine grace be felt, renewing, sanctifying, saving us. "Work is better than faith," is a saying of which many persons are fond; but is it not a foolish saying, since it is predicated on a separation that should never be allowed? If faith without works be "dead," works without faith are but fictitious testimonials, inspiring a confidence that is not deserved. It is written, that love is greater than faith; but love is the element which faith calls forth in the soul, a proof of its efficacy. It is by faith that we "are saved," and it is the soul that is at once the seat and the subject of salvation. Let us never forget these truths; for they are fundamental and vital. Denying them, we destroy ourselves; neglecting them, we are lost.

In what has now been said, has not the work of the Christian minister been brought under our notice? What is that work, if it be not to preach the gospel as it is set before him in the ministry and teaching of Christ himself? And, with this for his pattern, is it not plain beyond denial, that he must make it his aim to lead souls to salvation through faith, — to spiritual and full salvation through the faith which quickens and renews, protects and strengthens and sanctifies, the soul?

There is but little danger in this age, and certainly but lit-

tle danger in this country, that the minister's office will be unduly exalted. Nor is it for the sake of bringing back a more just appreciation of the place which it holds among the Divine agencies connected with the world's welfare, that I would now assert its true dignity. As a legitimate inference from our past remarks, and as appropriate to the present occasion, I maintain, that it becomes him who would be faithful to the functions of this office to magnify its importance in his own eyes, and in the eyes of the people, by using it for the purpose which his Master contemplated in its institution. Why should not the minister give himself wholly to his work, as to one that demands all his powers? Is there not enough for him to do? Is it so light a task to instruct men in the knowledge of their highest relations, to awaken them to a sense of their most sacred duties, to bring them to a true repentance for sin? Is there not enough, in what is covered by such a statement, to fill the incumbent of this office with the most profound concern for his own fidelity? Why shall he not make his peculiar connection with the community foremost in their regard as well as in his own? What should we think of an artist who kept out of sight the object of his life, careful not to allude to it, anxious only not to seem an artist? Why shall the merchant talk of his business, and show in what estimation he holds the affairs of this life; and the minister of Christ not, for a similar reason, — similar, yet immeasurably stronger, — speak and act and appear as if he felt that the things of the kingdom of heaven are of inconceivable moment? Some ministers are afraid of wearing a professional character. Out of the pulpit, and in the pulpit too if possible, they would seem "not ministers, but men." It is a mistake, a sad mistake. The more a minister he who takes up the preacher's task, the better man. His whole life should be professional. It is his business to save souls. Not his business alone: every man is bound to do what he may for the spiritual good of his fellow-men. Not on him falls the sole

or the chief responsibleness for the religious condition of any one of his congregation: every man is intrusted with the care of his own soul; and, beyond any help to be derived from a fellow-being, he must be the author of his own salvation. But the special and great business of the minister's life is to save men from spiritual ignorance, dulness, negligence, and ruin; from sin and its evils: to save them through faith. This should constitute the staple of his preaching, the burthen of his conversation, the lesson of his example, the effect of his influence. He does some good, doubtless, by preventing religious institutions from falling into decay; still more by promoting the interchange of kind feelings and social offices; more yet by showing the bearing of Christian truths on questions of personal and civil life, on business, and politics, and every worldly interest. But the great and special service demanded of him by God, by man, by his own conscience if properly taught, is the salvation of human souls, so far as it can be effected or promoted by his agency. To this service may the ministry introduced here to-day be devoted; and, if no other soul be saved, he at least whom we consecrate by our prayers and our sympathies will save his own soul with an "eternal salvation."

CHARGE TO THE PASTOR.

BY REV. A. P. PEABODY, D.D.

My friend and brother, did I doubt that you were bringing to the work of the gospel ministry a spirit of hearty self-consecration, I should not willingly participate in these services. But trusting that, in the charge you now assume, you are obeying the felt call of God, — "Son, go labor in my vineyard," — and that you here are simply putting the public seal on vows that have rested on your soul for years of prayerful study and self-discipline, I deem it the less incumbent on me to urge upon you those duties of personal piety and devotedness which must lie at the basis of your professional success. Indeed, on these duties, what could I utter that is not more than comprehended in the charges given to Timothy and Titus by one who could say, with literal truth, "I have received from the Lord that which I deliver unto you"? I will therefore confine myself to a few practical suggestions on a single branch, and that the most important, of your ministerial labors, — the preaching of the word.

This, I say, is your most important function. To this, all the others are subservient; from this, all the others derive their vitality and their worth. Elsewhere, and at other times, you will go forth bearing precious seed; but it will often fall upon the hard highway of a working-day world, and among the thorns of secular care. Here, on the Lord's Day, you have a soil in some degree prepared and laid open for the

seed. Elsewhere, and at other times, you may seek to do your Master's work; but you may, however discreet, strike upon seasons unpropitious for the best influence. Here, and on the sabbath, you and your hearers meet with a reciprocal purpose. They come to listen to the message which you come to give. They are in a more favorable posture than at any other time for meekly receiving the truth, and for forming appropriate resolutions of duty and obedience. Magnify, then, your office as a preacher.

That you make the preacher's office all that it ought to be, I charge you, in the first place, to preach, not yourself, but Jesus Christ. It is not by learning, talents, or eloquence alone, that you are to wield your legitimate influence. In either or all of these, you may find your equals or superiors among those to whom you minister; and, even if you have these gifts more abundantly than they all, the time will often come, when, in your haste and weariness, they must suffer an eclipse, and you will find yourself incapable of appearing before your people "with enticing words of man's wisdom," and compelled to deliver your message, not only with great plainness, but with conscious poverty of speech and thought. The minister who regards the pulpit as an arena for the display of intellectual gymnastics, and expects success only by the competition of mind with mind on equal ground, must be a man of consummate self-conceit and arrogance in order to assume such an office, and thus to make the tacit declaration that his is the master-mind of the whole parish. Your true vantage-ground is the "Thus saith the Lord," of express revelation, — the explicit teachings, the transparent life, of Jesus; the spirit of the living God that dwelt and spake in him. Your province is to stand in God's and Christ's stead, to speak in their venerable names, to fortify yourself by their constraining authority. While, therefore, you covet earnestly the best gifts that can accrue to you from self-culture and study, you are to rely on them only as the means of appre-

hending and setting forth the mind of Jesus, and to seek acceptance with your hearers for his sake, and not for your own. Account yourself as his interpreter. Let your views of nature, providence, life, and duty, however wide a ground they cover, be based on his teachings and example.

Preach Christ also as the motive. Rest not satisfied with the presentation of mere law, however strict and uncompromising; nor yet of retributive sanctions, however decisive and far-reaching: for, by the preaching of mere law and retribution, you make the mountain of holiness a second Sinai, at which men will gaze with trembling dread, but with no attempt to climb. Such preaching excites only a consciousness of sin and a vague self-loathing. It has no motive-power; it imparts no strength; it makes the impotent man keenly aware of his infirmity, but cannot say to him, "Arise and walk." The efficient force for the regeneration of the soul is indicated in such sayings as these: "The love of Christ constraineth us;" "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them;" "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." The cross of Christ is the great reconciling agent; the love of Christ, and of God in him, the awakening power for those dead in trespasses and sins. Preach, then, "Christ, and him crucified," — "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Make your hearers feel the intensity of redeeming love, and draw them by those "cords of love" which are aptly termed, in holy writ, "the bands of a man," — the only chains in which the will can be held captive, the only constraint by which man can be made and kept holy.

In your preaching, you will, of course, make it your first aim, after your divine Master's example, to call sinners to repentance. There will be among your hearers the careless, worldly, and indifferent, — few, it may be, whom the community calls sinners, but not a few to whom Jesus would say,

"Yet one thing thou lackest," — and that one thing the only foundation of enduring peace and impregnable virtue on earth, the only ground of hope for eternity. Of these, whenever you stand here, you may be addressing some for the last time; and your next ministrations for them may be by the deathbed or over the lifeless dust. Will you, then, let any sabbath pass, without having said some word which may reach such hearts; which may lead to a conviction of sin, and to solemn thoughts of duty, accountableness, judgment, and eternity?

But yours will be a lame and imperfect ministry, if you make penitence, and the first steps of the Christian life, your only themes of exhortation and appeal. Yet, by many, the ministry seems to be regarded mainly in this light, as a sort of life-boat for the transportation of successive freights of souls from the more perilous to the safer bank of the river of spiritual death. The perfecting of the saints, the edifying of the body of Christ, is a no less essential part of your duty. You are to guide your flock in progressive sanctification; to train them to quick moral sensibility, rigid conscientiousness, spiritual industry and thrift, earnest effort and willing sacrifice in the cause of God and of man. Then, too, you are to make the way of Christian progress as delightful as it is arduous; to open the consolations, refreshments, and rewards of piety; to exhibit each separate jewel in the Christian's crown of rejoicing, as it sparkles in the clear sunlight of the eternal day.

In preaching the word, let me next charge you to avoid vague generalities. Fight not as one beating the air. Let your parochial walks often furnish you with topics for your discourses, and suggest your heads of illustration and appeal. We clergymen possess the power of making parochial visits directly useful in widely different degrees, according to our various conversational gifts and habits. All can do something in this way; while some few may effect more thus than

in the pulpit. But we all equally need familiar interviews with the people of our charge, — whether they are attended with much, little, or no immediate benefit, — in order to give aim and point to our preaching. Your parishioners, if you cultivate their intimacy, will mark out much of your work for you, and will render your choice of subjects difficult, not from the fewness, but from the multitude and variety, that will be continually suggested to you. Preach often to individuals. Take in hand a particular case. Address yourself to the ascertained and known wants of some one mind and heart, and preach as if that person were alone with you. Whenever you do this, you will reach and move many; for there are hardly any moral or spiritual idiosyncrasies. In your profession, as in that of the physician or the surgeon, when you thoroughly understand one single case, you have the key to a multitude of cases.

Let your preaching cover a wide range of subjects. Whatever involves questions of duty and accountability, appertains to the pulpit, which should furnish a religious commentary on the whole of life. It does not belong to you — nay, it is unworthy of you — to treat of secular subjects in their secular aspects, — to preach on business or on politics as such: but it is your imperative duty to discuss the daily and secular affairs of life in their religious bearings and relations; to point out the snares and dangers, the responsibilities and obligations, connected with trade and commerce; to apply Christian maxims to the attainment and use of property; to rebuke carelessness as to the pecuniary rights of others, cupidity, and the haste to be rich; to cast the healing branch into the waters of political strife; to check the virulence, intolerance, and recklessness of party spirit; and to make men feel themselves amenable to God in the discharge of their functions as citizens.

Remember, too, that in matters of practical duty, no less than in theoretical truth, new light from time to time breaks

forth from the word of God; and that you, placed as upon a watch-tower, may be expected, as to the signs and demands of the times, to anticipate your people in intelligence. You should be the first to catch the breeze, to hear the voice, to see the beacon-fire. You may sometimes feel constrained to utter a call of duty for which your people are unprepared, to present views and applications of the divine will and law which you know to be unpopular. If so, first assure yourself that the demand is made upon you, not by any outside pressure, but by your own conscience; and that you can speak in your divine Master's name, and sustain yourself on his authority; and then address yourself manfully to your work, praying for a double measure of your Master's meek and gentle spirit, tempering your boldness with love, and seeking to be guided by the wisdom from on high, which is as peaceable as it is pure. Thus may you maintain your true place, as the leader of your whole flock to an ever-larger comprehension and higher standard of Christian duty.

My brother, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace. May his perpetual blessing be with you in your work! As your day, so may your strength be! And may your whole strength of mind, heart, and character be your living sacrifice on this altar, — a sacrifice which shall constantly number the tokens of its acceptance in souls reclaimed, enlightened, consoled, gladdened, made meet for the service of God on earth, matured for the enjoyment of his love in heaven!

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY REV. S. H. WINKLEY.

In the name and by the authority of the ecclesiastical council here assembled, and the churches therein represented, I extend to you, my brother, this right hand of fellowship; and would most cordially bid you welcome to the Christian ministry.

I say, to the Christian ministry: not to the dissemination of mere intellectual speculations, which, however much they may excite the admiration of the preacher for his own views, leave the parish to perish; nor to the teaching of human creeds, thereby engendering strife, and spreading any thing but the kingdom of God; but to the Christian ministry, — to the service of him whom you delight to recognize as your Lord and the world's Redeemer.

You know that a very little intelligent faith in the Lord Jesus will impart more true philosophy and sound theology to the mind than aught else. There are in this community, as elsewhere, honest, intelligent individuals, tormented by doubt, and weakened through unbelief. These are waiting to receive you. It is a delightful privilege to be permitted to show to them one good and sufficient reason for trusting in Jesus as the Son of God; thus enabling them to receive that which the intellect, uninstructed by God, cannot attain; and,

what is far better, thus aiding them to find that spiritual strength and peace which flow only from faith in Christ. To these individuals and to this labor of love, I bid you welcome.

No man living is free from trials. You have had your share, and will have. Not all your dreams have been realized, nor all your plans successful. But you know in whom you trust. He doeth all things well. This has been your support and your cheer. Therefore, I bid you welcome to many a person here having a fuller share of disappointment, and a larger amount of difficulty, than has as yet been measured out to you. These are waiting for you to make manifest to them how Jesus' constant sympathy with man reveals God's interest in every one of us; how the Son's declaration, "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father, the very hairs of your head are all numbered," should lift the burden of care from his children; how this faith shall make them "rejoice in the Lord always," as one heeding their lightest sigh, — so that, though they walk through the darkest valley, they may do so without fear, ay, with much hope that "all shall issue well;" inasmuch as He, who hath given us his own Son, will with him freely give us all things.

You have tasted affliction. Although your nearest and dearest may not have been taken from you, yet all who gathered at the family board in childhood are not now on earth. It may be that you intuitively perceive the future life; or that arguments, drawn from nature, render to you probable the world to come: and so you are comforted. Whether this be so or not, I am sure that that home with the Father is made a certain fact to you only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore do I welcome you to those whose nearest and dearest do sleep; who are waiting for you to direct them to him who came down from heaven, and declares that "he that believeth in me shall never die." By which declaration, we are assured, that, "if our earthly house of this

tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, — a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

You have sinned. Beyond all trials, you have regretted this; beyond all afflictions, it has pained you. You have had aspirations after a holy life, and have labored hard to reach eminence therein; but real success you have found only through Christ, the Redeemer. Therefore do I bid you welcome to all in this congregation alike touched by sin, and longing for freedom. They are waiting for you to so present to them the Son, that, loving him, they shall love the Father, and, by that love, be purified in heart, and clothed in the beauty of holiness.

You have been deeply moved by the evils which so terribly affect mankind. Your sympathies have led you to desire some successful remedy. You have learned by experience, that, when you have the spirit of Christ, you are true everywhere. Therefore do I bid you welcome to an unusually large number here, who have the same strong wish to bless their fellows, and who, while they will rejoice in being aided by you in every good word and work, will be most happy to learn that only name giving perfect salvation, and to co-operate with you for the spread of that only kingdom which successfully banishes all sin.

You have sometimes climbed the height where self is forgotten, and the soul stands ready for any work which shall glorify God and bless man. There are hearts here waiting to be led in the spirit of the Apostle Paul, — "to fill up, if need be, what is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body, which is the church," and for the redemption of the world. To these I welcome you.

To this ancient pulpit, so tenacious in its hold of every preceding pastor; to this house, consecrated by the religious experience of so many generations; to this Sunday school, among the first in the land; to this church, whose members gather around the table here, on their way to join those

above; and to the homes and hearts of this people, — do I bid you welcome.

To the companionship of the Christian ministers and churches of this town, who, as far as they see you to be Christian in word or work, will fellowship you; to the fellowship of every Christian minister and church everywhere; and especially to the church, existing in all denominations, through faith in Christ, — do I welcome you, and bid you God speed.

Once more, my brother, I extend to you this right hand of fellowship, and bid you welcome to the minds of sceptics, that you may show them the way to their hearts; to the hearts of sinners, that you may lead them to Christ; to the love of the children, that they may be kept in the arms of the Saviour; to the hearts of saints, that you may lead them to noble labors of self-sacrifice and love in the cause of Christ; to those who shall be born of God through your ministry here; and to the gathered testimonials of your fidelity hereafter. And may God bless you in all things, now and for ever!

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

BY REV. A. WOODBURY, OF PROVIDENCE, R.I.

I CONGRATULATE you, my friends, upon the renewal of these sacred ties of pastor and people. I am particularly glad, that, in the absence of him who had the better right, it becomes my privilege to claim for our brother a cordial reception from you. I do this the more willingly, because I know your readiness to grant it.

Born and reared among you, I think I know somewhat of your kindness and your generosity. I know I can bespeak for him a genuine, hearty, and disinterested welcome. Your homes will be open to him; your hearts will greet him with affection; you will appreciate the honesty and manliness of his life; you will heed the plain sincerity of his speech. I think I know somewhat of the catholicity of your religious faith, the strength of your religious principles. It is but natural, that, in this ancient parish, — founded in the earliest times of our colonial history, — there should be a conservative adherence to the truths of the past. But there is also, and there has always been, that candor and openness in religious inquiry, that seeking after and rejoicing in the light which is perpetually breaking forth upon the word of God, that loyalty unto every right conviction, which betokens the truest progress in religious life. One thing, indeed, you have been remarkably conservative in, which, in these days of change,

affords a good augury for your new pastor's happiness; that is, the preservation of the pastoral connection unbroken for many years. You allow no root of bitterness to grow up here. It is now nearly two centuries since this church was organized as an independent Congregational church; and it is a matter of pardonable pride in me now to remember, that of the fifty-four members then composing it, and uniting with it in the first year of its existence, twelve bore my own name. Since that time, for a term of one hundred and ninety-two years, there have been but seven ministers; four of whom have died in office. An average of over twenty-seven years of pastoral relationship is certainly a fact worthy to be commemorated to-day. It is a good thing for our brother to know at the outset, that, following the example of the past, you intend these ties to be permanent. The decrees of Providence, in summoning the faithful servant of God away from earth, will be submitted to with resignation. But, while he is alive, your kindness will not allow your minister to accept any call which offers less inducement than an election to the Presidency of Harvard College.* If there is any reason for congratulating you upon having such a pastor as he promises to be, I can also congratulate him upon having such a parish as I know you are. But, however agreeable it may be to dwell upon this theme, it is not what you have requested me to do to-day. I have come, not to speak of the past, but to enforce, if possible, the present duty; and to say a word of encouragement to the future work. What I shall say will be brief and plain.

The first work of a Christian minister is to preach; the first work of a Christian congregation is to hear. Your minister has been ordained to the work of proclaiming the gospel. He is not to provide for your entertainment; but he is to

* One of the early ministers of this parish (Rev. Joseph Willard) was elected President of Harvard College in 1781. Another (Rev. Joseph M'Kean) was elected President of Bowdoin College in 1802.

labor for your good. It is to be presumed that he will order his pulpit services and his common daily walk among you to secure that end. He will doubtless rebuke what he sees in your action to be wrong and mean, and unworthy of yourselves. He will encourage what he sees to be right and true. He will preach to you from his own heart and conscience what he has found to be the truth of God as manifested to his own soul. It may cut across some cherished prejudice or some secret sin of yours. But not the less boldly is he to speak; withholding nothing, concealing nothing, reserving nothing; making no compromise with any thing false for the sake of peace, and doing nothing which is unworthy of a teacher of divine truth.

It is to be presumed that he will be guided by principle, not policy; that he will not trim or weigh his words to serve the expedients of the present hour, or to secure your applause. He has some nobler aim than personal popularity, or the love of ease, or the desire of your favor.

Parishes do a great wrong to their minister, when they impute to him any other motive in his preaching than to know and do God's truth, and obey his own conviction of duty. A minister has temptations enough trying to induce him to swerve from the strict line of rectitude in thought and speech, without adding to them the thought that his parishioners believe him to be insincere in his self-devotion. A man in this office takes upon himself the service of God, not of man; and he should be willing to consider all things as dross, — reputation, personal comfort, personal popularity, as nothing, — when God's service demands it.

First, then, you are to receive the words of your minister, as you gather here from Sunday to Sunday, as the speech of a true and honest man. You have, indeed, a right to expect that he will try to preach to you so as to satisfy your needs; that his words will convict you of wrong, when you have been guilty; that they will encourage you to duty, when

duty is difficult; that they will comfort your sorrows, when life becomes a wearisome burden; that they will heighten your joys, by bringing upon them the sanctions and benedictions of a divine mercy. You have a right to expect that the words which shall be spoken here will help you in the work of self-conquest; will deepen the spirit of self-consecration; will incite you to self-culture, unto all things grand and noble and beautiful and true in character. This is the legitimate use of the service in which you here engage. All its various offices of prayer and praise and preaching are to the effect of making life more just and pure; of bringing upon all the outer life of men the power and intensity of an inner life, which shall be filled with faith in truth and Christ and God. Come, then, in this spirit. Here you are to "strive together for the faith of the gospel." This man, whom you have asked us to ordain to-day, is not to have dominion over your faith, but is to be the helper of your joy. As you come here from the toils and cares of life, and sit in the attitude of listeners, let it be with a generous confidence filling your hearts, and candor and sincerity in your minds. Then shall every prayer here uttered by the lips or felt in the heart; every hymn here sung; every teaching of prophet, apostle, and Saviour, here spoken, — aid in working out the widest results of good.

Having thus prepared yourselves to hear, do not hear captiously. Doubtless your minister will say some things which you may not altogether assent to. If he does, do not you fly into a passion about it. Rather be glad that he has an independent mind; that he thinks for himself, and speaks as he thinks. You would not certainly have your pulpit only a reflection of your pews. Question yourselves whether he or you are wrong. If you do not agree with him, go and tell him so, face to face. A great deal of harm is often done by nursing a disagreement, by talking of it among the different members of the parish, and allowing it to work

its way insidiously into the very life of the parish, till it has poisoned it to its centre. If you have aught to say about your minister, say it to him. Let your disagreements be discussed in the spirit of friendship. Let different opinions be brought together, and compared; let them be accurately judged and weighed. How soon it will be found, that, though truth has a wide, many-sided circumference, opening to all quarters, it yet has but one centre! Believing your minister to be honest in his speaking, it is certainly a corresponding duty for you to be honest in your hearing.

Again: do not hear to criticize. Do not expect to hear great sermons, nor what are called smart sermons, nor sensation sermons, nor even popular sermons. Such are usually unprofitable sermons. No clock strikes twelve every time. Sometimes, if, by any sudden inspiration or by persistent industry, any of us may happen to strike the highest number, there are, at least, eleven chances against our striking any thing but one the next time. What is most beneficial is plain, simple, direct speech, charged with correct thought and a sincere spirit. The polished rhetoric, the fine elocution, the skilfully rounded period, the musical and euphonious speech, the rhythmic flow of words, are not, indeed, to be disregarded; yet you know that there must be a genuine man behind all these, or they are nothing but tricks and displays and emptiness. A man may be brilliant and dazzling; but, without an earnest purpose and real truthfulness, his brilliancy is like auroral splendors, — glittering and flashing, even to the zenith, through frosty air, and from fields of Arctic ice! Do not, therefore, assume the attitude of critics, but of learners and disciples. Do not have any desire to find fault, nor even to be pleased, but to be benefited, and to carry away a blessing.

Then you will hear with profit, and you will go away, not with the words upon your lips, "How rare and beautiful a speech that was!" or "How dull and tedious!" but with

the secret feeling in your hearts, even though it be unexpressed, "How good has it been for us to be here!" The influences of the Sunday service shall go with you through all the week-day life. Every duty shall be less difficult, every care less vexing, every toil less wearisome, every grief less heavy. Affection shall be purer, the work of life more beautiful, and every day pass on, leaving a blessing ere it goes.

It is necessary also to hear with the determination to apply what is heard to the government of the daily conduct. When the minister pronounces some great principle of righteousness, believe that he is speaking that you may understand and apply it. When he is denouncing some practice of unrighteousness, do not complacently say, "That fits the case of Neighbor A or Neighbor B: I hope he will apply it." Believe that possibly some portion of it may be found applicable to your own case. If you were to pass your minister's preaching from one to another, you might pass it entirely out of doors, and it would dissolve into thin air. There is an incident related of a sermon which met with an application more surely and readily than perhaps the preacher himself intended. He had delivered a pungent discourse upon the use of dishonest weights and measures. An old lady, who kept a little store, was among the congregation, and paid especial attention to what was said. The next day, the minister called on her, and took occasion to ask her what she remembered of the sermon. She complained of her bad memory, but finished by saying, "I remembered — I remembered to burn my bushel measure after I reached home."

Sometimes parishioners complain of a minister, that he does not grow; that his preaching does not show any tokens of improvement. The fault may be in them, and not in him. As a general rule, the members of a parish can help their minister as much as he can help them. They can encourage and sustain him by their cordial sympathy, their ready co-

operation, their untiring fidelity. Let your minister, as he speaks to you from this place and looks into your faces, feel that you are not dull, listless, sleepy, — hearing the service like a self-inflicted penance, and wishing that it might be soon over, — but that you are wide awake, alert, thoughtful, with minds, ears, eyes, all open to receive what he has to give.

Let him, then, find you punctually here. The engagement which you make with him, to be here at the appointed hour of service, should be considered as binding as any business engagement would be. Keep that engagement with the utmost strictness. Do not, any of you, be known as "the man that always comes in late." Let him find you constantly here, in fair weather or in cloudy weather, in the sunshine and the storm. It is possible that the minister has been thinking of your particular needs, and has prepared a sermon especially for your benefit. Let him not be disappointed, as he looks around upon the congregation, and sees that your seat is vacant; and that, so far as you are concerned, his labor is unavailing. Let him be encouraged by the hope and conviction, that you will certainly be at church. You do not know how much it helps a preacher to know that there is even but one pew that will always be filled; that, on every Sunday morning and afternoon, he will see the familiar faces greeting him with welcome attention; that no word will be lost, no exhortation fall dead, no appeal fail of reaching its end. Cannot each one of you provide that that pew shall be yours? One such parishioner we knew, now gone to his reward. Always in his place, paying close attention to all the service, interested and earnest in every good word and work, his presence was a perpetual help; and, as we have seen him here, — a man of upright conscience, of clear intellect, and of manly soul; with the eye bright with the radiance of thought, and the glory of white hair around the venerated head, — his presence was a perpetual benediction.

Our brother comes to you as a friend, as well as the minister of your parish. Give him your friendship with entire confidence, not obtrusively and forwardly, but in a genuine and hearty way. Do not force yourselves upon him. Do not allow yourselves to keep aloof from your minister's friendship, while, at the same time, you do not officiously obtrude upon him. Do not waste his time by unseasonable calls and unreasonable exactions. Let your intercourse always be of a true, generous, and lofty kind. Do not vex him with the gossip of the parish. In one presence, at least, the petty scandal of the village must be silent. Let there be between your minister and you a converse of a better kind than that. Let there be no coldness, no reserve, no distant, formal restraint. Let your intercourse be of the frankest and openest character. Tell him your doubts, your griefs, your spiritual experiences. Be cheerful and genial with him. Cheerfulness comes of a religious nature, and grows in life from the soul at peace with God and man. This earth, with its surroundings, is a bright, and not a gloomy place. This world is God's world, and is illumined everywhere by God's smile of love. There are some who seem to think that piety must wear a morose and solemn air, a sanctimonious and grave countenance. True piety wears a cheerful look, and shines out from the face in beauty, generosity, and grace. Coleridge told the truth when he sang, in poet's numbers, —

> "He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things, both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."

But, in being friendly with your minister, do not be too familiar with him. Do not pet and flatter him. There is scarcely one of us but may easily be spoiled by too much indulgence. Do not surround him with a factitious reverence, as though he were a saint; or give to him that ideal

character which only exists in the dreams of enthusiastic youth. He is simply a man, just like yourselves. Treat him in a manly way. Let him be respected according to the manliness of his character. Let him have that authority which belongs to his truthfulness and honesty. Do not be jealous of him. Let him choose his intimate friendships as best suits his inclinations and aptitudes; and let no one feel that he or she is neglected because not admitted to his intimacy and confidence. Do not attempt to influence him by telling him of what his predecessors have done, and how they have spoken and acted in a certain exigency. Nothing is so apt to frighten a young minister so much as the spectres of his predecessors. The ancient Egyptians had a custom at their feasts of bringing out among their guests a miniature mummy, as a remembrance of some deceased ancestor, or for other purposes, doubtless best known to themselves. There are some parishioners who are perpetually bringing up before their minister's mind the memory of some lamented predecessor. If you have any such mummy here, please keep it in your closet while your minister is with you. Let him follow his own way of action, without hinderance on the one hand, or officious advice upon the other. What are his predecessors to him, or he to them? Cherish the memory of their virtues: but still bear in mind, that this man is now your minister; and let him have the fullest liberty to manage his affairs as his own judgment dictates.

My friends, I have spoken to you plainly and frankly, as I promised. I have spoken of those familiar things, which, in their very familiarity, are too apt to be neglected. Ever cherish the high and best regard for the relation which this day you have entered upon. Let its object, above all and beneath all, be with you, to grow into all virtue, strength, and love; to enlarge and expand your souls to all generous and Christian life; and to make sure, in this world and in

the next, the Heaven that will for ever bless you. These venerable walls will at some time fall to decay. These places which know us will soon know us no more for ever. Our names will pass away, and we shall vanish from the memories of men. But the being that we are will live for ever; the being that we make ourselves to be is immortal.

Now we have come to the close of the year. The harvest has been gathered in with thanksgiving. Through all the summer long, and through the autumn days, has the fruit ripened. Every ray of sunlight, every drop of rain, every gentle fall of dew, every hour of labor and every hour of rest, the darkness and the light, all things in Nature and Providence, have helped in bringing the year to its result of blessing.

So may we well believe that every faithful work done in all God's vineyard, inspired and freshened by every influence of heavenly grace, will aid in bringing on the harvest-time of God. Our brother's work will help, and your work too; and may God assist you both to be faithful to it, to Him, and to each other!

Order of Exercises

AT THE

ORDINATION OF JOHN C. KIMBALL,

AS PASTOR OF

THE FIRST PARISH, BEVERLY, MASS.,

Thursday, Dec. 29, 1859.

I. VOLUNTARY AND INTROIT.

"The Lord is in his holy temple."

II. INTRODUCTORY PRAYER.

BY REV. CONVERS FRANCIS, D.D., OF CAMBRIDGE.

III. SELECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

BY REV. C. H. WHEELER, OF SOUTH DANVERS.

IV. HYMN.

O Thou who art above all height, —
  Our God, our Father, and our Friend!
Beneath thy throne of love and light,
  Let thine adoring children bend.

We kneel in praise, that here is set
  A vine that by thy culture grew;
We kneel in prayer, that thou wouldst wet
  Its opening leaves with heavenly dew.

Since thy young servant now hath given
Himself, his powers, his hopes, his youth,
To the great cause of Truth and Heaven,
Be thou his guide, O God of truth!

Here may his doctrines drop like rain,
His speech like Hermon's dew distil,
Till green fields smile, and golden grain,
Ripe for the harvest, waits thy will!

And, when he sinks in death, — by care
Or pain or toil or years oppressed, —
O God! remember then our prayer,
And take his spirit to thy rest.

V. SERMON.

BY REV. EZRA S. GANNETT, D.D., OF BOSTON.

VI. ORDAINING PRAYER.

BY REV. GEORGE W. BRIGGS, D.D., OF SALEM.

VII. HYMN.

Lift aloud the voice of praise!
God, our Father and our Friend,
Hear the prayer and song we raise:
Weak, yet trusting, we would bend.

Lo! another servant brought
To the heritage of God:
May he teach as Christ hath taught;
Tread the path his Saviour trod!

To the vineyard may he come
Girded with celestial might,
Skilled to draw thy children home,
Taught to give the darkened light!

Unto thee a people bend:
Bind us heart to heart in love.
Flock and pastor, we would tend
Ever toward our home above.

VIII. CHARGE TO THE PASTOR.

BY REV. A. P. PEABODY, D.D., OF PORTSMOUTH, N.H.

IX. RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY REV. S. H. WINKLEY, OF BOSTON.

X. ANTHEM.

"How beautiful upon the mountains!"

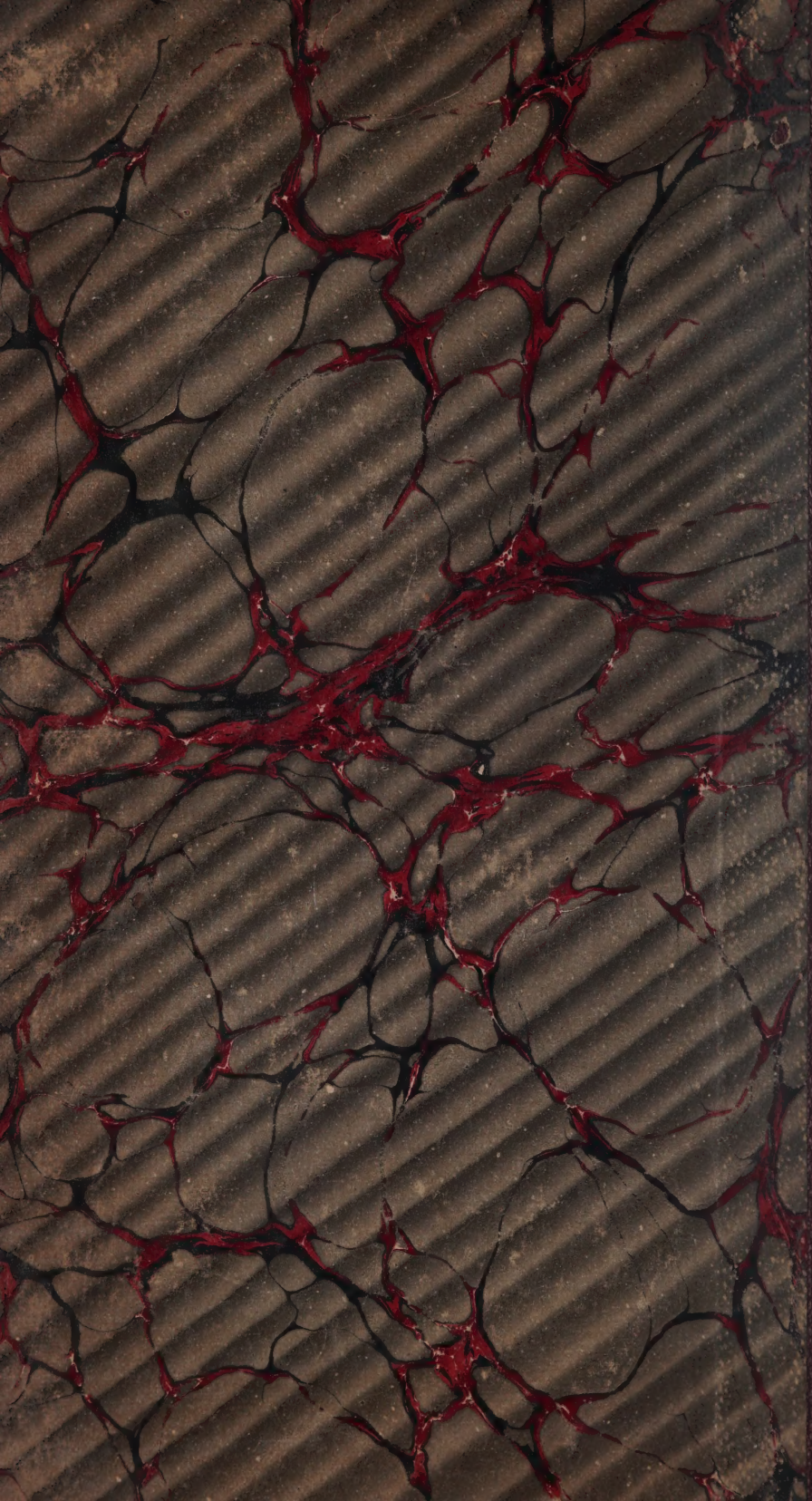
XI. ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

BY REV. AUGUSTUS WOODBURY, OF PROVIDENCE, R.I.

XII. CONCLUDING PRAYER.

BY REV. DEXTER CLAPP, OF SALEM.

XIII. SANCTUS AND HOSANNA.

XIV. BENEDICTION.

BY THE PASTOR.